

The Growing Years

Healthy Start...where good results begin

5 Years

Your Child Wants You To Know

How I Move:

- I enjoy activities requiring hand skills.
- I draw a recognizable person.
- I am skilled and accurate with simple tools.
- I can sit still for brief periods.
- I enjoy jumping, running and skipping.
- I have adult-like posture in throwing and catching.
- I have great physical drive.
- I like dancing, am rhythmic and graceful.
- I sometimes roughhouse and fight.
- I am well coordinated.

How I Think:

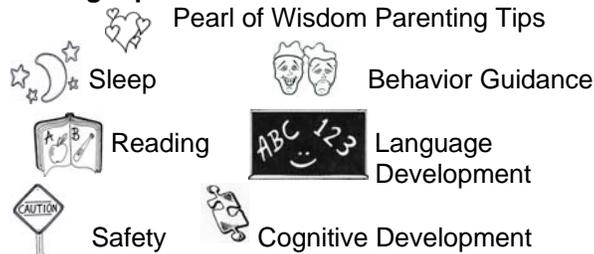
- I am curious about everything.
- I am ready for short trips into the community.
- I know my family name and address.
- I talk clearly about my ideas.
- I am self-centered about my ideas.
- I like to be busy making something.
- I make a plan before starting a project.
- My attention span is 12 to 18 minutes long.
- I can carry over play interests for more than one day.
- I play on a realistic level in dramatic play.
- I readily use complete sentences.
- I count 10 objects.

How I Get Along:

- I am becoming poised and self-confident.
- I copy adult behavior and act grown-up.
- I am aware of rules and define them for others.
- I play in groups of two to five children.
- I am less competitive than at age 4.
- I am sensitive to teasing and get hurt feelings easily.
- I have to be right.
- I like the companionship of adults.

- I am sociable and like to visit.
- I may get wild, silly and giggly.

Watch for these symbols to find articles on the following topics:



The Five-Year-Old

What a great age! Your five-year-old is probably very sociable, thrilled to have a good play with her friends, or with a "best friend". She has tons of energy, and she needs it for dressing up, building, pretending, riding, running. Her imagination drives much of her play- a five-year-old can imagine that a pinecone is an enchanted jewel, or that a twig is a potential magic wand.

Your child is developing many new skills. Perhaps she can ride a trike, or even a tiny two-wheeler, with confidence. She can use scissors and other handy gadgets for her projects and crafts. She comes up with interesting questions about the world around her. And when your five-year-old asks why, it won't be an idle inquiry –she'll want to know the answer because her ability to understand and remember your explanations is growing in leaps and bounds.

She also likes to be with you, helping out with little jobs, sharing jokes and stories. In a way, this is a special time for parents. A five-year-old's focus is still firmly on her home and family – the allure and excitement of school, friends, and outside activities are yet to come.



Enjoy! Understanding their growth and development will help you guide 5-year-olds through this stage. Remember that all 5-year olds are different and reach various stages at different times.

Relationships and the 5-Year-Old

The 5-year-old is entering a period of self-discovery in establishing relationships with others. It is a time when social skills first seen in the preschool years are beginning to be polished. Children find out about themselves by relating to other people in the larger world around them. Relationships form the backbone of this discovery.

The number, quality and kinds of relationships constantly change during childhood. The peer group will become increasingly important as children spend more time with each other and less time with their families. The peer group gives children the chance to measure the development of their abilities and skills in relation to other children. It also contributes to how children feel about themselves.



As children grow and develop, interactions with parents change. Their independent/dependent struggle can be hard for parents to understand.

However, throughout the 5th year, the home and family are still very important to children. They provide psychological safety, a place where children know what is expected of them, sense that they are valued, and still can let their true selves and deepest feelings show.

Quarreling among siblings happens in every group and every family despite ages and numbers of people. Some of the most quarrelsome children are the quickest to defend their brothers and sisters from outside attack. Arguing may tax adults, but it contributes to a child's development. Within families, children learn much from each other like how to argue, defend themselves, stand up for their own rights, and make peace.

Here are some characteristics of a 5-year-old's relationships:

- Many 5-year-olds fall in love with their kindergarten teachers. Everything a teacher says may become law and the child may often misinterpret what the teacher tells them.
- Although 5-year-olds love their teachers, their closest ties are still to parents.
- Socially, one-to-one contacts are best and they easily choose friends of either sex as playmates. However, their playmates may change from day to day.
- Five-year-olds have a great need to be first, to win, to be the best. They often tell one another, "You are a dumb painter" or "You run too slowly to be on my team."
- Five-year-olds will bribe peers with grand promises, at least for a while (for example, "If you let me go first, I'll bring you gum tomorrow"). However, by the end of the year, they begin to recognize which children follow through with promises and which don't.
- Nearly every 5-year-old reports at some time that, "No one likes me," "Sarah never lets me play," or "Everyone is mean to me". These remarks are as apt to be expressions of fears as they are accounts of actual events or circumstances.
- Five-year-olds like to role-play and to be picked for special jobs. They are able to choose their activities and friends more easily at this age than they will be able to just one year later.

Parenting Styles and How They Affect Children



Research has determined there are three different styles of parenting; authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. Here are characteristics of each:

Parenting Style: Authoritarian (Autocratic)

| "Do what I say!" | Children |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Control is a major issue. | Are unable to initiate an activity. |
| You're the boss. | Have difficulty make friends. |
| Rigid rules. | Have poor |



| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| | communication skills. |
| Children aren't asked, they are told. | Are coercive, sneaky. |
| Demand respect through fear. | Are demanding. |
| Ignores feelings of children and others. | Are unsympathetic. |
| May use physical punishment and humiliation to get cooperation. | Are withdrawn. Comply or defy. |
| Little verbal exchange takes place. | Are lonely. |
| Makes all decisions | Have poor self-image. |
| Lack inner controls. | Are scared. |

Parenting Style: Authoritative (Democratic)

| <i>"Let's talk it over."</i> | <i>Children</i> |
|--|---|
| Power is shared. | Are socially competent. |
| Parent sets rules and limits, but children have choices within limits. | Are trustworthy and responsible. |
| Shows loving firmness. | Have high self-esteem. |
| Recognizes normal stages of growing up. | Are cooperative. |
| Fosters self-control in children by not bribing or punishing. | Have strong self-discipline, are confident. |
| Corrects misbehavior by talking about feelings. | Develop positive relationships with expectations and what to do instead family, friends and others. |

Parenting Style: Permissive There are two types of permissive-Indifferent or Uncaring and Indulgent or Lenient.

| <i>"Do what you want to."</i> | <i>Children</i> |
|--|--|
| Indifferent or uncaring | |
| Won't accept power. | Are discouraged. |
| Not involved in children's lives. | Defy limits, yet want and need them. |
| Parent feels he/she has not right to limit child's behavior. | Have no self-control. |
| Indulgent or lenient | |
| Highly involved with children. | Lack social skills and responsibility. |
| No rules. | Have no inner controls or self-discipline. |
| No demands or expectations. | |

Research In Brief: Cooperative Play

Although parents and caregivers want their children to play cooperatively with other children and to share and help others, 3, 4, and 5-year-olds have difficulty doing so. Why is this? According to the famous Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, children are not always able to act in positive social ways towards others because they are egocentric. They are unable to take the viewpoint of another adult or child or to imagine how that person may feel or think. In other words, because of their lack of social experiences and the incomplete growth of the central nervous system, children are not developmentally able to put themselves in the place (or in "the shoes") of another. They are only aware of their own feelings or thoughts.

For example, if your preschool child grabs a toy from his 18-month-old sister, he may look at her with amazement as she starts to cry. He is happy because he wanted the toy, and now he has it. He cannot put himself in the place of his little sister and realize that his behavior has caused her to feel sad or angry.

The following situation is another example of children's egocentrism: *Four-year-old Susan wants to help mix the cookie batter. She runs to the table, climbs up on a chair and begins to stir. On her way to the table, however, she knocks over her 19-month-old brother, Ted, who begins to cry. Susan continues to stir, seeming not to notice her brother's tears. Susan's caregiver stops Susan and says, "Susan, you knocked Ted down. How would you like it if he knocked you down?" Susan looks at her caregiver briefly and then continues to stir the cookie batter.*

Many parents and caregivers would be either angry or astonished by Susan's behavior. But her behavior is very "normal" for Susan's age. Susan has little or no understanding of how her brother is feeling. She only knows how she is feeling happy, and she is only focused on stirring the cookie batter.

Susan does not understand the difference between right and wrong or good and bad.



Parents and caregivers spend a great deal of time trying to teach their children how to be cooperative, how to help, share and be “good”. Researchers in child development have found that there are some things adults can do which especially seem to help children learn these behaviors. Here are some ideas:

- Encourage your child to talk about his feelings in relation to other children’s behavior. For example, say “How did you feel when Jimmy knocked over your blocks?” Tell your child how his behavior has affected another child. For instance, say, “When you knocked your brother down, he felt angry and hurt.”
- Talk about the similarities and differences between your child’s feelings and the feelings of others in a variety of situations. For example, you might say, “You were excited and happy about making cookies, and Kathy was sad,” or “Both of you are upset that you can’t have ice cream cones.”
- Tell your child how his or another child’s behavior has affected you, such as “I get upset when someone gets knocked over because he might get hurt.”
- Help your child remedy the situation. For example, in the situation of Ted and Susan, after you have talked to each child about his/her feelings, you might say, “Susan, let’s make some room so that Ted can also stir the cookie batter. Ted, you can stand on this chair and help Susan stir. I’ll hold on to you so you won’t fall, and I’ll help you stir if you need help.” By approaching the situation in this way, you are teaching both children how to solve an interpersonal problem. Also, through your example of helping Ted, you are letting children see that it is important to help others and to share in an activity.

In conclusion, researchers have found that children who share, cooperate and help other children and adults are likely to have parents and caregivers who are warm, affectionate and nurturing.

Games For Growing

Scratch Art

Ask your child to color a sheet of stiff paper with different colored crayons. Next, color over the

whole sheet with black crayon. Your child can then make patterns by scratching through the black layer with his fingernail or other tool (such as a ballpoint pen without a point, etc.) to expose the mixed colored layer.

Language Games

Playing language games with preschoolers can expand their cognitive skills (the ability to think and know things). But parents should make it fun. Here are some games that parents have enjoyed with children of many ages.

- Think of a word and ask your child to tell you the opposite word. You may begin by saying “high” and the child says “low.” Other words, you might use are “go, come;” “in, out;” “over, under;” and “above, below.” Take turns letting your child lead the game. This game teaches a wide variety of concepts.
- Look at an object and say to the child “I see something red. What do I see?” The child tries to guess what you see. Now the child selects an object to describe. This game helps children use and understand language. It also fosters the use of descriptive words.
- Tell the child to “touch your face, and then touch your foot.” See if the child can follow directions. When the child can carry out one direction, add another. Three directions in a row are enough for the child to remember. Now listen and follow the child’s directions. Playing this game will help children learn to remember things.

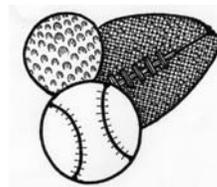


One of the greatest rewards for being a parent comes with sharing good times while playing with children. As you have fun with children, you are creating a strong relationship. The bond you are developing between you and your child will last throughout life.

Toys for Growing

For Active Play and Physical Development

- Assorted blocks
- Balls and beanbags
- Push and pull toys
- Hollow blocks
- Carpenter’s bench



- Tools
- Wheelbarrow
- Crates and boxes
- Ladders
- Bikes

For Dramatic and Imaginative Play

- Doll corner materials
- Costumes
- Children's house play materials
- Telephone
- Puppets and stage
- Tents or "caves"

For Creative and Constructive Play

- Crayons and paper
- Clay or play dough
- Blunt scissors
- Colored cubes
- Simple puzzles
- Large wooden beads
- Easel, paints, paper, brushes
- Scrapbooks and pictures for pasting
- Simple paper dolls
- Materials for dressing dolls
- Knitting wool
- Simple cut-outs
- Sewing material
- Musical instruments



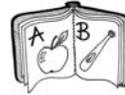
Although there is no specific age when a child starts using playground equipment, skates, bikes, or other outdoor toys, the child should be old enough to know the dangers of such equipment and be taught to follow certain rules.

- Bicycles, tricycles or sleds should not be used where there is traffic, and should be used carefully in areas where other children are at play.
- Roller skates should be taken off before crossing the street, and should be used with the appropriate safety gear.

Adults or parents should see to it that swings and other playground equipment are firmly placed in the ground, away from walls and fences, and out of the direct line of automobile or pedestrian traffic. The equipment should be the right size for the child, assembled according to the directions of the manufacturer and properly used.

Leap Into Literacy

The Best Books for Busy Minds



Preschoolers like books that tell stories; they are also increasingly able to turn paper pages and sit still, so longer picture books are a good choice for this age group. Continue to read your child books with predictable texts and familiar vocabulary, but include those that have a richer vocabulary and more complicated plots. Consider reading chapter books that take more than one session to finish.

Your child is curious and likes reading books about kids who look and act like him or her, but also will want stories with kids who live in different places and do different things. Expose your child to many characters and talk about how they act and what decisions they make. Make sure that there are talking animals, monsters, and fairies in the mix to stimulate your little one's vast imagination.

Reinforce your child's positive feelings about something he or she has learned to do (kick a soccer ball, paint a picture) by reading books about children who have done the same thing. And pick books that will challenge your child and help further developing skills. Alphabet books, counting books, or books with lots of new vocabulary are all good choices.

Books about going to school – especially when your child is about to start preschool or kindergarten – are a great choice for kids this age. So are books about making friends.

Pick nonfiction books that talk about a single subject of interest to your child – owls, the ocean, the moon, Borneo- especially if they have great illustrations.

And don't forget poetry – preschoolers still love rhymes. This age group is starting to enjoy jokes, so silly poems or songs will be a huge hit.

Wordless picture books that convey meaning through the illustrations are also a good choice. Once the two of you have been through a wordless book a couple of times, your child will most likely begin telling you the story – and may



even be found "reading" the story to favorite stuffed animals or dolls.

Try homemade books too – photo albums with captions and scrapbooks captivate preschoolers. When your child makes drawings, ask him or her what they are, label them, then assemble them into a "book" that you and your child read together. You can even laminate the pages and have fun creating book covers so that they will last for years to come.

Books aren't the only things your preschooler will love to read - magazines with lots of pictures and catalogues are also appealing. And ask people your child loves to send letters or postcards. Read these together and keep them in a special box where your child can look at them.

Children and Literacy

Literacy is the basis of your child's learning. Your child is literate if they know how to use language with confidence, including speaking, reading, and writing. Literacy skills begin in the preschool years and are built on through the school years. You are your child's most influential teacher and can encourage them in ways to enjoy speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Speaking and Listening

You can help your child develop listening and speaking skills in many ways.

Suggestions include:

- Encourage conversations with your child. Be an example of how to listen and take turns speaking.
- Take the time to listen to your child's stories without interrupting, correcting, or judging.
- Include your child in family discussions and appropriate decision making.
- Expose your child to various types of music.
- Explain and model social etiquettes of conversation, such as not to interrupt when someone is talking or how and when to use titles such as "Mr." "Ms."



Reading

You can help your child develop reading skills in many ways. Suggestions include:

- Lead by example and allow your child to see you regularly reading newspapers, books and magazines.
- Encourage your child's reading by showing them how to find information that is of interest to them. This may include television guides, dictionaries, cookbooks, and the sports pages of newspapers.
- Play word-oriented games with them.
- Have plenty of books appropriate to your child's reading level in the house.
- Read stories together.
- Let your child read and choose from the menu when out for a meal.

Writing

You can help your child develop writing skills in many ways. Suggestions include:

- Lead by example. Allow your child to see you regularly writing for different reasons – letters, thank you notes, holiday and birthday cards, lists – or filling in forms.
- Make sure your child has plenty of their own writing materials, such as their own paper, pens, and pencils. Where possible, let them choose their own writing material and create a special place for their "writing."
- Encourage them to start their own journal to record their activities, thought and special occasions.
- Give your child time to practice using a computer. Let them teach you what they know about the computer and display their ability to use its many programs.
- Ask your child to make and decorate cards for birthdays, to say "thank you" or for other occasions.

Working with Your Child's Teachers

Research shows that when parents and teachers work together, children do better. You can improve and support your child's developing literacy skills by working in partnership with their teachers. Some suggestions include:

- Get to know your child's teacher.
- Inform the teacher about your child's life at home and learn what is going on in your child's early childhood or school setting.



Maintain an open dialogue about all aspects of your child's learning, including any concerns you may have about your child's progress.

- If possible, involve yourself in your child's early childhood and school life by offering to help out in areas where you feel comfortable. Suggestions include assisting the learning in the room, helping to organize school fests, or participating in the parent's club, committee or council.
- Support your child as much as you can by attending their special occasions such as concerts, sports days and presentations.
- Encourage your child to start his/her own out-of-school projects. Offer support only when asked.

Things to remember

- Your child is literate if they know how to use language with confidence.
- You are your child's most influential teacher and can encourage them in many ways to enjoy speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- The first five years of schooling are the most important in laying the foundation of literacy.

15 Minute Literacy Activities

Recipe for Reading

The next time you cook with your children, read the recipe with them. Step-by-step instructions, ingredients, and measurements are all part of words in print!

Shop and Read

Notice and read signs and labels in the supermarket. Back home, putting away groceries is another great time for reading labels.

A Little Longer?

When your child asks to stay up a little longer, say yes and make it a 15-minute family reading opportunity.

Tidbits for the 5-Year-Old

Communicating Love

Actions speak as lovingly as words. Everyone needs to hear and be shown that they are loved. Feelings of self-esteem can be greatly

improved simply by really listening to the child and then recognizing his feelings. All feelings need to be accepted. Actions may need to be limited. Some examples might include, "I see you are really excited. You need to sit on the couch" (for a child who is jumping on the couch) or "You feel angry, but people are not for hitting" (for a child who has hit out of anger).

Cuddling with a parent and a good book, quiet talks just before bed, hugs and kisses for no reason at all are the best gift to give the children you love. Saying, "I love you" never goes out of style and the color and fit are always perfect. Deliver this vital message in as many ways as you can think of. Write it in the snow, learn it in sign language, write it in symbols to go in a lunch box, tape record it on a secret message, frost it on a cookie, shout it in a crowd. However you choose to tell your family members you love them, do it now and do it often. It's a great habit to get into!

Why Does My Child Seem Afraid of the Dark at Bedtime?

The unknown or the imagined may still frighten the 4 or 5-year-old child. Fears of real objects can be noted also. It seems at times baffling to parents to observe their child jumping happily into bed and quickly falling asleep, but on another occasion crying because the light has been turned off at bedtime. Fearful responses to the dark occasionally continue during the 5th year, and at times beyond. Reassurances by parents and even a night-light can help to comfort a child frightened by the dark.



Sleep defiance issues are typical. To find a solution:

- Determine the cause of the behavior (attention-seeking, fear of something, exerting independence) and make proper adjustments (change the bedtime, put in a nightlight).
- Set aside time each day to talk to your child about school and other things going on in her world.
- Stick to your usual bedtime routine, but include choices, which will help your child feel in control.



- Stay consistent and firm. Every night, adhere to the same bedtime rules. And, no matter how tired you are, don't give in to her requests or demands.

Nutrition: A taste of Independence

The start of kindergarten may mean that your child will eat at least one meal per day outside of your home. Make sure she's prepared. Talk to her about healthy eating habits and the importance of a balanced diet. Also, make sure she knows about any food allergies or other dietary restrictions that she has.



Rules of the Road

Your child should ride in his booster seat until the adult seat belt fits properly, usually between 8 and 12 years old and about 4 feet 9 inches tall.

Be sure your child wears a bike helmet while riding a scooter or bicycle.

Vision and Hearing Screening

Your child should have her hearing and eyesight checked at this year's well child check-up. Her vision should be 20/30 or better. Check with your medical provider and school to ensure she has had the required immunizations.

Sources

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Remember, this developmental mailing describes a typical child at each age. Each child is special and each child develops at his or her own pace. Perfectly normal children may do things earlier or later than those described in this mailing. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your medical provider.

This developmental mailing gives equal time and space to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she". When we use he or she, we include all children. Fathers, partners, and other significant adults all play an important role during pregnancy and in childrearing. When we specifically refer to "fathers", the information may also apply to partners and/or other significant adults involved in childrearing.

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